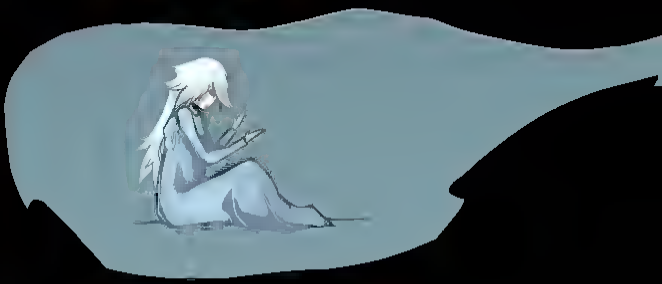
LONG AGO, WHEN I AWOKE IN THE HOUSE FOR THE FIRST TIME...

I KNEW I WAS DEAD.

I JUST KNEW.

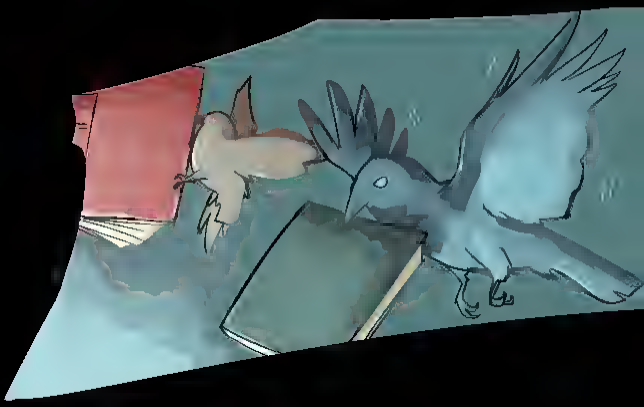


THIS WASN'T HEAVEN...

SO WHAT WAS GOING ON?
I SEARCHED THE HOUSE FOR ANSWERS.

WHO WAS I?
HOW DID I DIE...
AND WHAT HAD
I BECOME?

THE HOUSE HAD A *LIBRARY* UPSTAIRS,
SO I DECIDED TO *RESEARCH* MY *CONDITION*.



THERE WAS *NOTHING* ABOUT MY...ER...
PARANORMAL ABNORMALITIES IN THE
BIOLOGY OR *ANATOMY* TEXTS...

SO I TURNED TO LITERATURE...

In the dark shadow of the grove, on the margin of the brook, he beheld something huge, misshapen, black and towering. It stirred not, but seemed gathered up in the gloom, like some gigantic monster ready to spring upon the traveller. The hair of the affrighted pedagogue rose upon his head with terror. What was to be done? To turn and fly was now too late; and besides, what chance was there of escaping ghost or goblin, if such it was, which could ride upon the wings of the wind?

Agitated by a multitude of curious thoughts, I retired to my room, that night, prepared to encounter some new experience of a spectral character. Nor was my preparation needless, for, waking from an uneasy sleep at exactly two o'clock in the morning, what were my feelings to find that I was sharing my bed with the skeleton of Master B.!

I sprang up, and the skeleton sprang up also. I tben heard a plaintive voice saying, "Where am I? What is become of me?"

Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with!
I SPENT THE REST OF THAT NIGHT
WRESTLING WITH MY THOUGHTS...

W-WAHH···I'M JUST LIKE A SPIRIT FROM THE BOOKS!
I'M ALL CURSED AND UNFORTUNATE!
I'M GONNA HAUNT THE PLACE I DIED IN FOR ETERNITY, WITHOUT EVER KNOWING WHY!

WAIT A MOMENT...
DOES THAT MEAN THERE ARE OTHER CREEPY SPIRITS OUT THERE?!

I MUST HAVE SPENT *MONTHS* HUDDLED IN THAT LIBRARY, PARALYZED BY *FEAR*.

BUT...THOSE MONTHS *PASSED*.

THEN *YEARS*.

THEN *MANY* YEARS.

AND ALTHOUGH THE OCCASIONAL FOOLISH BREATHER STUMBLED INTO MY HOME, NO OTHER GHOST EVER CAME.
THOSE FABLES IN THE LIBRARY?

THOSE FABLES IN THE LIBRARY?

JUST *FABLES*.

I'M NOT SOME MONSTER,
I'M JUST *ME*.

AND I TOLD MYSELF IF I EVER
MET *ANOTHER* SPIRIT, THEY'D
BE *JUST LIKE ME*, TOO.

GHOSTS AREN'T *MONSTERS*.

THEY *AREN'T*...

NOTHIN' PERSONAL,
SWEETHEART!

BUT...

THIS ONE...

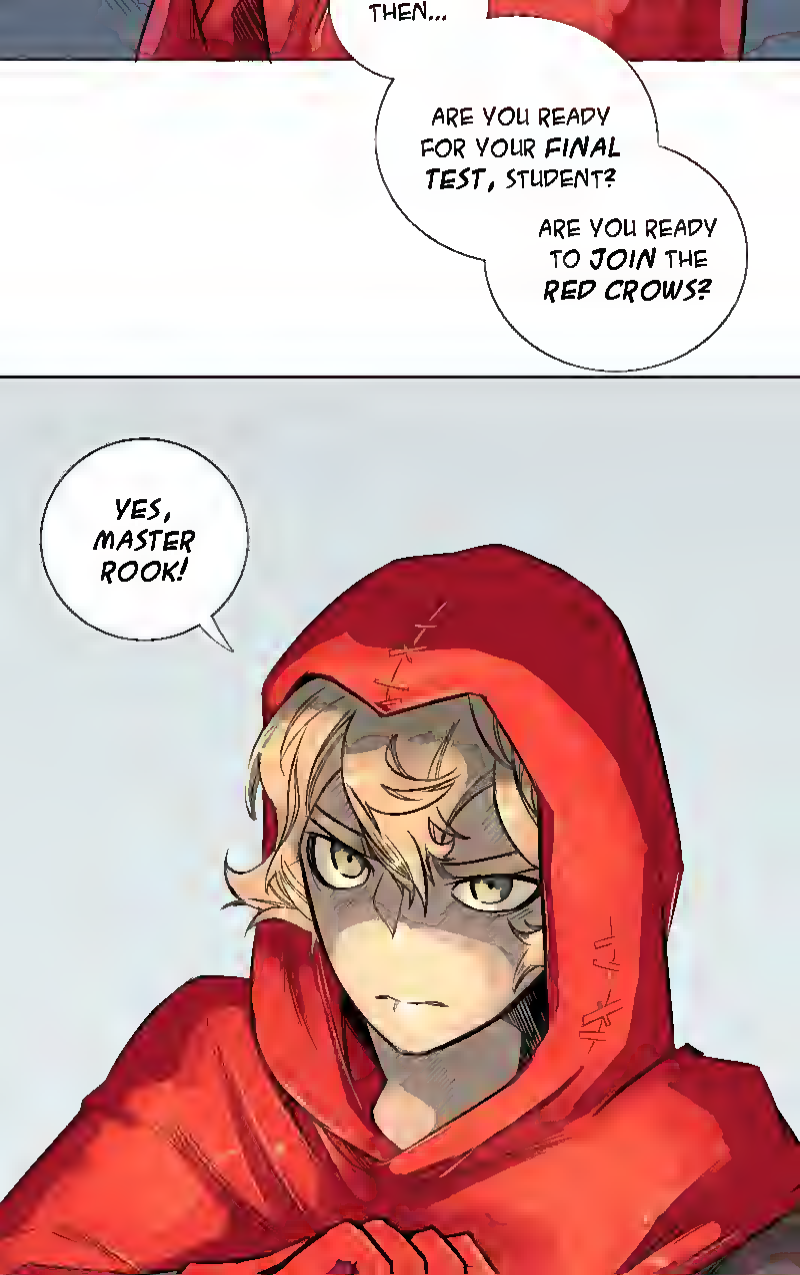
IS JUST LIKE SOMETHING
OUT OF THOSE BOOKS...

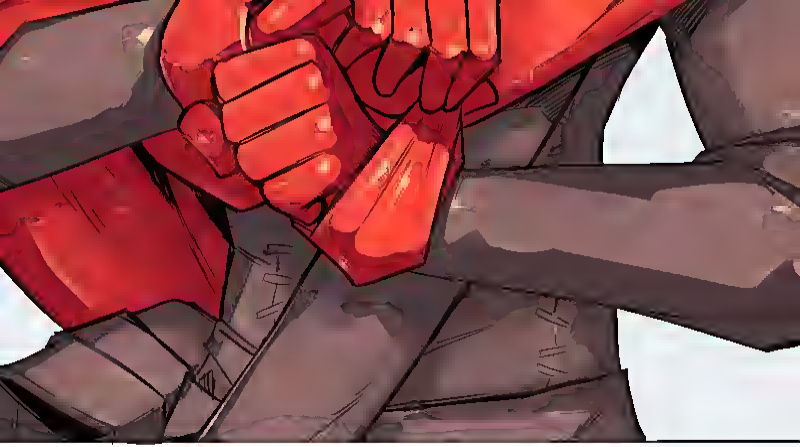
OOOOOOMM...
DRAT AN' CURSES! THEY'RE HERE ALREADY?!
I'M STILL TOO WEAK TER PUT UP A FIGHT AGAINST 'EM!
THOSE LIGHTS – THEY'RE PUTTIN' UP A BARRIER!
GOTTA FLY OUTTA HERE BEFORE THEY FINISH IT!
FWNGHH

GUH...
SNACK YOU LATER, WISP!
I FEEL...
FUZZY...
IS THIS..
PAIN?!

OOOHMM...
WELL THEN, FLEDGELING.
THE RUNAWAY HAUNTER'S TRAIL LEADS INTO THIS HOUSE.

I'VE ESTABLISHED A BARRIER AROUND THE PERIMETER TO TRAP HIM IN.
SO,


THEN...
ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR FINAL TEST, STUDENT?
ARE YOU READY TO JOIN THE RED CROWS?
YES, MASTER ROOK!



RISE FROM ASHES